

Conditions And Guidelines For Calling People To The 'Aqeedah Of The Righteous Salaf, Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa'ah

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Bismillaahir-Rahmaanir-Raheem

Calling people to the 'Aqeedah of the righteous *Salaf* can only be done by meeting three conditions:

1. Soundness of belief

We must believe in what the righteous *Salaf* believed in, namely *Tawheed ar-Ruboobiyah* (Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's Lordship), *Tawheed al-Uloohiyah* (Maintaining the Unity of the worship of Allaah), *Tawheed al-Asma' was-Sifaat* (Maintaining the Unity of Allaah's divine Names and Attributes), and in all the issues of 'aqeedah and eemaan.

2. Soundness of the method

i.e., understanding the Qur'aan and Sunnah in the light of the principles established by the *Salaf*.

3. Soundness of action

i.e., not introducing any innovations, rather, doing it sincerely for the sake of Allaah alone and in accordance with His Shari'ah, whether it is the matter of belief, deeds or words.

Because calling people to Allaah is one of the noblest of deeds and loftiest forms of worship, and it is one of the most unique characteristics of the Messengers (alayhim as-salaam) and one of the most important missions of the close friends of Allaah (*awliyyaa'*) and the purest of His righteous slaves. Allaah says:

"And who is better in speech than one who invites to Allaah and does righteousness and says, "Indeed, I am of the Muslims."

[Fussilat (41): 33]

The Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) taught us how to call people and convey the message to them. His *seerah* or biography contains many lessons for those who want to learn.

Those who call people to the 'aqeedah of the righteous *salaf* have to follow the method of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam) in *da'wah*. Undoubtedly, his way is a clear and sound method of calling people to Allaah, and is sufficient so that they have no need of the innovated methods that people have introduced and which go against the method and way of the Prophet (sallallaahu alayhi wa sallam).

Hence, the *daa'iyahs* must call people to Allaah as our righteous forebearers, the *Salafus-Saalih*, called them, whilst paying attention to differences in time and place.

Based on this sound understanding, I have tried to list some of the guidelines and starting-points for *daa'iyahs*, hoping that this will be of benefit in the reform for which we are working.

Guidelines And Starting Points For Daa'iyahs

1. It should be noted that *da'wah* or calling people to Allaah is one of the means of attaining salvation in this world and in the Hereafter, because if Allaah guides even just one person through you it will be better for you than red camels (the best kind). The reward is bestowed simply for calling people, and it does not depend on the response. The *daa'iyahs* are not required to achieve the victory of Islam, for this is a matter which is under Allaah's control. But the *daa'iyahs* are required to do their utmost for that goal.

Preparation is required of the *daa'iyahs*, and victory is a promise from Allaah. *Da'wah* is a form of jihad, sharing the same aims and results as fighting.

2. This method of the early generations of the ummah, as represented by the way of *Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jamaa 'ah*, must be emphasized. It is known for its moderation, comprehensiveness and balance, far removed from either neglect or exaggeration.

It should be based on *shar'i* knowledge that is rooted in the Qur'aan and *saheeh* Sunnah; this will protect it, by Allaah's grace, from failure, and bring light to the one who is determined to follow the path of the Prophets.

3. There should be the desire to create a Muslim community (*jamaa 'ah*), united in the truth and following the right way. The word of unity (*Tawheed*) is the basis of the unity of the ummah. They should also keep away from the fragmentation that is afflicting Islamic groups nowadays such as the blameworthy factionalism that is dividing the Muslims.

The correct understanding is that any group that comes together to call others to Allaah is to be regarded as a group of Muslims, not *the* group of Muslims (the *jamaa 'ah*).

4. Loyalty must be to Islam, not to personalities. For truth abides but personalities fade away. If you know the truth, you know its people.

5. Calling for cooperation and everything that may lead to it, and keeping away from topics of dispute and everything that may lead to them. We should help one another and advise one another with regard to the issues that we disagree on, provided that these are issues in which we are allowed to hold different views. We should also avoid bearing grudges because of differences of opinion.

The basic principle for Islamic groups is that they should work together and be united. If that is not possible, then they should cooperate. If that is not possible, then they should live and let live, for what is beyond that leads to doom.

6. People should not be fanatical in their devotion to the group of which they are members, nor should they reject any good effort made by others, so long as it is in accordance with shari'ah and avoids the extremes of carelessness and exaggeration.

7. If there are differences concerning minor issues of shari'ah, they should be dealt with by means of sincere advice and discussion, not dispute and fighting.
8. Self-criticism, constant reviewing and ongoing correction.
9. We should learn the etiquette of dispute and the principles of debate. We should appreciate their importance and how to put them into practice.
10. We should avoid making general judgements and beware of their consequences and of not being just when judging individuals. Part of justice is to be objective.
11. We should distinguish between the ends and the means. For example, *da'wah* is the end, and the movement, the group (*jamaa 'ah*), the Islamic center, etc, are the means.
12. We should persist in pursuing our goals, but we should be flexible about the means, within the limits of what is permitted in shari'ah.
13. We should pay attention to priorities and deal with matters in order of importance. If we must deal with a minor issue, then it should be dealt with at the right time, in the right place and in appropriate circumstances.
14. It is important to make the most of previous experience in *da'wah*. The *daa'iyah* should not start from scratch, because he is not the first person who has come forward to serve this religion and he will not be the last, because there has never been and there will never be anybody who is above needing advice and guidance or who has got everything right or everything wrong.
15. Respecting the scholars of this ummah who are known for their adherence to the Sunnah and their correct '*aqeedah*'; acquiring knowledge from them; respecting them and not looking down on them; refraining from slandering their honour; not doubting their intentions or making accusations against them and not being partisan in following them either. For every scholar gets some things right and some things wrong; mistakes will be rejected and returned to the one who makes them, but he remains a good scholar so long as he is a *mujtahid* and is striving to his utmost.
16. Thinking positively of the Muslims, interpreting their words in the best possible sense, and concealing their faults whilst not neglecting to point them out to the one who is at fault.
17. If a person is mostly good, his bad points should not be mentioned unless that serves a purpose. If a person is mostly bad, his good points should not be mentioned, lest that should confuse the masses.
18. Using the terminology of shari'ah because of its precise meanings; avoiding foreign words and distortions; for example, saying "*shoora*" (consultation) instead of "democracy."
19. The correct stance towards the *madhhabs of fiqh* (schools of thought) is that they are a great legacy of *fiqh*. We should study them and benefit from them, without being partisan in adhering to anyone school. We do not reject them altogether; rather we avoid what is weak (*da'eef*) and use what is true and right in the light of the Qur'aan and Sunnah and the understanding of the first

generations of this ummah.

20. Defining the correct attitude towards the West and Western civilization, and benefitting from their empirical sciences, subject to the guidelines and principles of our great religion.

21. Affirming the importance of *shoora* in *da 'wah*, and the necessity of *daa'iyahs'* learning the *fiqh* of consultation.

22. Being a good example, because the *daa'iyah* is the mirror of his *da 'wah* and an example from which others will learn.

23. Following the path of wisdom and beautiful preaching. Making the words of Allaah:

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best. Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who has strayed from His way, and He is most knowing of who is [rightly] guided."
[An-Nahl (16): 125)]

the standard of *da 'wah* and the principle to follow.

24. Acquiring patience, because this is the attribute of the Prophets and Messengers, and the reason for the success of their *da'wah*.

25. Avoiding extremism and being aware of its negative consequences. Striving to be easy-going and gentle, within the limits permitted by shari'ah.

26. The Muslim is a seeker of truth, and being brave in speaking the truth is something that is essential in *da 'wah*. If you are unable to speak the truth then do not speak falsehood.

27. Beware of slackening and its negative consequences; do not be negligent about studying its causes and the means of dealing with it.

28. Beware of rumours and spreading them, and the bad effects that this has on the Muslim community.

29. The measure of superiority is *taqwa* (piety) and righteous deeds; keep away from all ignorant and *jaahili* forms of sectarianism based on region, tribe, sect or group.

30. The best method of *da 'wah* is to present the basic principles of Islam first, not to present specious arguments and the refutations thereof. Then we should explain the truth to people, against which they may measure all things, and call them to the basics of Islam, addressing them according to their level of understanding and looking for ways to make the message of guidance enter their hearts.

31. The *daa'iyahs* and Islamic movements must constantly put their trust in Allaah, doing their best and asking Allaah for help, being certain that Allaah is the One Who controls the progress of *da 'wah* and helps the *daa'iyahs*, and that the religion and all matters are in the Hand of Allaah.

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These guidelines and principles are the fruit of the experience of many scholars and *daa'iyahs* who call people to Allaah. We must be certain that if those who call people to Allaah understand these principles and act in accordance with them, that will be very good for the progress of *da'wah*,

All *daa'iyahs* should realize that their affairs will not be sound and their *da'wah* will not succeed unless they rely upon Allaah, put their trust in Him in all their affairs, ask Him for strength, have pure and sincere intentions, free themselves from whims and desires and refer all their affairs to Allaah.